

## Is It Permitted to Own a Nursing Home That Has a Church Inside?

Rabbi Yosef Kushner

**Question:** Is it permitted to buy a nursing home that contains an in-house church that is used by the residents?

**Answer:** Since the church is trying to attract the residents of the nursing home, this site obviously provides them with a benefit they couldn't get elsewhere, which would mean that renting it to them presents a problem of *lifnei iver*. This would lead us to conclude that unless the church is currently in the middle of a lease, one may not rent to them.

Having said that, in some facilities it is stated in the bylaws that the home will provide a church and residents actually have written in their contracts that they will have a church on-premises. If that is the case, there may be room for leniency, as it could be argued that the church legally has the right to be there in any case, no matter who owns the building, and the owner is, therefore, not enabling them in any way.

When people ask such *shailos*, I advise them that if they could possibly close down the church, they should do so. If they legally can't shut it down, there may be some room for leniency.